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sensitive place. Women are certainly more genetically profiled to be less aggressive than men, to read body language more easily and to be more responsive to each other's needs and those things would not be influenced by culture.

On the other hand, women are also programmed not to be quite so task-focused. So arguably we'd be very cuddly but not so concerned with making money or building large corporations.

Women would have developed the ability to go out and be the hunter gatherers because in very primitive societies it's those who have the physical strength who rule. You can't say we'd never have gone to war - there are all-female Amazonian tribes who fight to protect each other - but there would be more focus on the family and more systems would be set up whereby people would be supported and nurtured. We'd have large, prioritised health services and schools and large charities for the old and orphaned. Women are much better at communications and empathy so we'd have a society which is much

more focused on taking other people's needs into account and pursuing compassionate goals rather than achievement goals.

THE HUMORIST
Kathy Lette, author of *Men A User's Guide*, says:

If women ruled the world we'd be so much brainier as we wouldn't have spent centuries getting concussion from hitting our heads on the glass ceiling.

In today's world women suffer from facial prejudice (we get judged on our looks in a way that men don't) which is why women waste so many hours grooming. If women ruled the world the only thing we would wax would be lyrical. Nor would we get nose bleeds from vertiginous heels. Or undergo painful cosmetic surgery.



Tampons, which offer freedom with strings attached, would be complimentary. As would all childcare. And there'd be no war - as feminists have always maintained war is just men's menstruation envy. Women only shoot from the lip.

(Kathy Lette's latest book - Men A User's Guide provides handy advice on how to house-train and tame the male sex.)

THE HISTORIAN
Dr Sarah Richardson, a lecturer in gender history at Warwick University

The church has historically had a huge impact on society. The parish managed all the social welfare aspects of the community including poor relief and occupational mobility. Pregnant women were often dumped back into old parishes so they weren't a burden on new parishes. If the church was managed by women I think these issues would be totally transformed. The focus would be on supporting families to stay together rather than taking the cheapest option.



Bringing this all up to date, it would have led to a much more cooperative view of welfare. British history has been driven by economics rather than need. In today's society debates about getting on your bike to have to look for work would be instead predicated on how to help individuals. You can imagine that the welfare state might have emerged much earlier.

When it comes to science and art, these are areas which historically were not populated by women. The patronage system and social system said women should not be painters or artists. You can imagine in a culture where women were in charge they would have been encouraged into those professions and there might have been an entirely different cultural landscape, one that privileges different forms of writing. If you think of such great female novelists as Jane Austen or George Eliot, what makes their novels compelling is the focus on relationships and the domestic setting. Compare, say, Shakespeare's great history plays which focus on leaders and war. You can see subtle differences in the way women write. It's also true that our greatest playwright might well have been a woman rather than a man.

I think sport would still be important but there might be less emphasis on the contact sports. Perhaps we'd have World Cups in netball rather than football.

Work is a crucial issue because it's so political. We've always made a big distinction between paid work outside the home and work inside the home. If women had always been the prominent ones in society I don't think there would be this distinction. Women would be paid for housework and bringing up the children. Domestic roles would be much more valued and this would have a dramatic impact on society.

Compiled by ANNA PUKAS AND JULIE CARPENTER